

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: EAGR, IZ
SUBJ: IRAQ'S 77/78 WINTER CROP ESTIMATES

REF (A) BAGHDAD 0200 (B) 77 BAGHDAD 1430

1. IRAQI NEWSPAPERS FEBRUARY 23, 1978, PUBLISHED A STATEMENT BY AN AGRICULTURE MINISTRY SOURCE GIVING THE FOLLOWING ESTIMATED PRODUCTION FOR THE 1977-78 WINTER CROPS:
(A) WHEAT: PRODUCTION OF 1,716,298 TONS FROM 4.6 MILLION ACRES YIELDING AN AVERAGE 774.4 LBS. PER ACRE.
(B) BARLEY: PRODUCTION OF 804,412 TONS FROM 2.07 MILLION ACRES YIELDING AN AVERAGE OF 855.4 LBS PER ACRE.
THE SOURCE SAID THAT ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THESE OPTIMISTIC ESTIMATES WAS THE GOOD RAINFALL DURING THE GERMINATION AND EARLY GROWTH PERIOD IN THE RAIN-FED PRODUCING AREAS.

2. ACCORDING TO THE GOI MINISTRY OF PLANNING'S CENTRAL UNCLASSIFIED

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STATISTICAL ORGANIZATION, 1976-77 WINTER PRODUCTION WAS AS FOLLOW:
(A) WHEAT: PRODUCTION OF 695,700 TONS FROM 3.4 MILLION ACRES YIELDING AN AVERAGE OF 455.5 LBS PER ACRE.
(B) BARLEY: PRODUCTION OF 457,700 TONS FROM 1.9 MILLION ACRES YIELDING AN AVERAGE OF 533.6 LBS PER ACRE.
COMPARISONS OF THESE FIGURES WITH THE ESTIMATES FOR

1977-78 INDICATE THAT THE IRAQI AGRICULTURE MINISTRY
IS HOPING TO RAISE WHEAT PRODUCTION BY 146.7 PERCENT,
AND THE BARLEY PRODUCTION BY 75.8 PERCENT.

3. COMMENT: EVEN THOUGH THE 1976-77 WINTER CROPS WERE
THE WORST IN RECENT YEARS, USINT BELIEVES THAT THE 1977-78
ESTIMATES, WHICH IMPLY SUCH SHARP INCREASES COMPARED TO
1976-77, MAY BE OVERLY-OPTIMISTIC. FREQUENTLY IN PREVIOUS
YEARS, LATE SPRING RAINS HAVE CAUSED EXTENSIVE WHEAT-RUST,
AND HAILSTORMS JUST BEFORE HARVEST HAVE CAUSED MAJOR
DAMAGE. IN ADDITION, THE SIZE OF THE CROP WILL DEPEND ON
TIMELY HARVESTING. THE STATE AGRICULTURAL STATIONS
ADMINISTRATION, RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST HARVESTING MACHINERY
FOR BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FARMS, REPORTEDLY HAS HAD
MAJOR PROBLEMS PROVIDING A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF OPERABLE
HARVESTERS AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME. END COMMENT.
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